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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 MEXICO 001461

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [MX](#)

SUBJECT: MIDTERM ELECTIONS SNAPSHOT: PRD REMAINS DIVIDED

REF: A. MEXICO 0990

[1](#)B. MONTERREY 0190

Classified By: Pol MinCouns Charles V. Barclay. Reasons: 1.4 (b and d)

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[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Factionalism, disorganization, and controversy continue to plague the Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD) well after campaigning for the July mid-term elections kicked off in early May. The leadership of Party President Jesus Ortega has not effectively galvanized the PRD, and the party is expected to perform poorly compared to the last nationwide election. Controversy in Zacatecas and Michoacan has undermined PRD standing and former party standard bearer Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador (AMLO) is creating further discord within the party by supporting candidates outside the PRD even as he recoups support among PRD hardliners. End Summary.

PRD Likely to Pick up Capital Borough While Seeing Overall Support Decline

[1](#)2. (SBU) The Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD) continues to raise minimal expectations among poll watchers. Some analysts believe it may only score ten percent of registered voters in the July 5 mid-term elections. According to Raul de la Paz, supporter of the radical United Left faction of the party, it may gain one of the two boroughs that it does not control in Mexico City but lose five or six others; 14 of the city's 16 boroughs currently have PRD borough chiefs. PRD candidate Ana Gabriela Guevara, a celebrity Olympic medalist, may generate the star power to win in Miguel Hidalgo, one of the two boroughs held by the National Action Party (PAN) in the capital.

[1](#)3. (SBU) While there remains little love lost among party principals, none has emerged as a particularly effective campaigner who might galvanize PRD voters in coming weeks. Party president Jesus Ortega has proven to be an ineffectual campaigner, whose promotional spots have drawn ridicule. For his part, Mexico City's Mayor Marcelo Ebrard has failed to pull capital-based party activists

together. PRD insider Marycarmen Soria said that, besides Guevara, there is little support for Ebrard among the candidates, adding that his support in the city's assembly likely will ebb after the elections.

AMLO's Electoral Gambit Confuses

¶4. (C) While he has maintained a high public profile, AMLO continues to generate discord in the PRD by supporting other leftist parties in TV commercials and campaign events outside the metropolitan area. (AMLO said that he would campaign on behalf of the PT-Convergencia coalition, "Let's Save Mexico," except in Mexico City and Tabasco, where he has his most loyal base of support among PRD members. However, he told supporters in Chiapas that voting for the PRD there would not be a "sin" as he is supporting some PRD candidates in that state.) AMLO's stance has generated a fair amount of backlash among other party leaders, and party president Ortega accused him of confusing party adherents. It remains a mystery whether AMLO and the PRD will formally cut ties. According to Soria, Ortega cannot afford to expel AMLO from the party, and

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AMLO may stay in the PRD even after the elections.

¶5. (C) Soria told Poloffs that AMLO retains a loyal core of militant leftist supporters who will vote as he instructs. This core from across leftwing party lines will garner about 15 hard-line supporters in the Federal Chamber of Deputies, mostly from PT and Convergencia but some from PRD. The PRD is expected to win fewer than 100 seats total. Some AMLO loyalists claim the former presidential candidate has been boosted by the weakening economy, the flu crisis and the recently published book by Carlos Ahumada in which he alleges that AMLO associates were entrapped in bribery scandals cooked up by former presidents Salinas and Fox to discredit his candidacy. Even if these assertions were true, however, increased support or sympathy for AMLO has not registered in the polls in terms of support for the leftist parties.

PRI Likely to Score from PRD Fisticuffs in Zacatecas

¶6. (SBU) PRD's standing was further dashed by a controversy in the state of Zacatecas which pitted PRD governor Amalia Garcia against longtime party heavyweight (and former Zacatecas governor) Ricardo Monreal. The two traded fire over the high-profile May 16 prison break which liberated 53 prisoners allegedly associated with the Gulf Cartel and an earlier marijuana bust allegedly implicating the Monreal family. Monreal used the breakout to criticize Garcia's stewardship of the state (even implying members of her team might have helped in the plot). According to Fernando

Belaunzaran, a PRD member of the moderate New Left faction, Garcia retaliated by leaking details of a January raid which netted 14.5 tons of marijuana at a warehouse owned by at least one of the senator's brothers. (PGR has initiated an investigation.) Amid charges and counter-charges of dirty tricks between Zacateca's two most prominent political families, Monreal formally split with the PRD on May 18. The feuding further divided Mexico's left, with mainstream PRD and PAN backing Governor Garcia, and the PT supporting Monreal (who has straddled the PT-PRD divide for several years). Standing to benefit from the mess, says PRD's Soria, is the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI).

Arrests in Michoacan

17. (SBU) Adding to the PRD's difficulties were the May 26 trafficking-related detentions of 28 high ranking officials in the state of Michoacan. Michoacan went solidly for the PRD in the 2006 elections and the majority (but not all) of the arrested officials were PRD. Coming on the heels of recent disclosures of wrongdoing by PRD candidates, and the resurrection of the Carlos Ahumada scandal of 2006, the latest arrests cannot but further damage the party's image as a principled counterweight to the PRI and PAN.

18. (C) Comment: To be fair, no party has been able to rivet the electorate in the run up to the July mid-terms. The shortened campaign season, further truncated by the

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flu crisis, and a Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) that is challenging party propagandists at every turn have combined to contribute to lackluster campaigns across the board, say analysts. But PRD has its own ample disadvantages and shown itself to be particularly inept at mounting a unified national campaign. End Comment.

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